

A
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
LAKE
AT
KESWICK,
(And the adjacent COUNTRY)
IN
CUMBERLAND.

COMMUNICATED IN
A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

BY A LATE
POPULAR WRITER:

K E N D A L:
PRINTED BY J. ASHBURNER.

M,DCC,LXX.



B. J. 1. 286

W

D

L

the t
l can
of th
ferio
niatu
more
mag
than

In
s see
raft
wen
a no

A
 DESCRIPTION
 OF THE
 LAKE
 AT
 KESWICK.

—IN my way to the north from *Hagley* I passed thro' *Dovedale*; and to say the truth, was disappointed in it. When I came to *Buxton*, I visited another or two of their romantic scenes; but these are inferior to *Dovedale*. They are but poor miniatures of *Keswick*; which exceeds them more in grandeur than I can give you to imagine; and more if possible in beauty than in grandeur.

Instead of the narrow slip of valley which is seen at *Dovedale*, you have at *Keswick* a vast amphitheatre, in circumference above twenty miles. Instead of a meagre rivulet, a noble living lake, ten miles round, of an

oblong form, adorned with variety of wooded islands. The rocks indeed of *Dovedale* are finely wild, pointed, and irregular; but the hills are both little and unanimated; and the margin of the brook is poorly edged with weeds, morasses, and brushwood.—But at *Keswick*, you will, on one side of the lake, see a rich and beautiful landskip of cultivated fields, rising to the eye in fine inequalities, with noble groves of oak, happily dispersed; and climbing the adjacent hills, shade above shade, in the most various and picturesque forms. On the opposite shore, you will find rocks and cliffs of stupendous height, hanging broken over the lake in horrible grandeur, some of them a thousand feet high, the woods climbing up their steep and shaggy sides, where mortal foot never yet approached. On these dreadful heights the eagles build their nests: A variety of waterfalls are seen pouring from their summits, and tumbling in vast sheets from rock to rock in rude and terrible magnificence: While on all sides of this immense amphitheatre the lofty mountains rise round, piercing the clouds in shapes as spiry and fantastic, as the very rocks of *Dovedale*.—To this I must add the

the frequent and bold projection of the cliffs into the lake, forming noble bays and promontories: In other parts they finely retire from it, and often open in abrupt chasms or clefts, thro' which at hand, you see rich and cultivated vales, and beyond these at various distances, mountain rising over mountain; among which, new prospects present themselves in mist, till the eye is lost in an agreeable perplexity:

*Where active Fancy travels beyond Sense,
And pictures things unseen.——*

Were I to analyse the two places into their constituent principles, I should tell you that the full perfection of KESWICK consists of three circumstances, *Beauty*, *Horror*, and *Immensify* united; the second of which is alone found in *Dovedale*. Of beauty it hath little: Nature having left it almost a desert: Neither its small extent, nor the diminutive and lifeless form of the hills admit magnificence.—But to give you a complete idea of these three perfections, as they are joined in KESWICK, would require the united powers of *Claude*, *Salvator*, and *Poussin*. The first should throw his delicate sunshine over the cultivated vales, the scattered

tered cots, the groves, the lake, and wooded islands. The second should dash out the horror of the rugged cliffs, the steeps, the hanging woods, and foaming waterfalls; while the grand pencil of *Poussin* should crown the whole with the majesty of the impending mountains.

So much for what I would call the *permanent* beauties of this astonishing scene. Were I not afraid of being tiresome, I could now dwell as long on its *varying* or *accidental* beauties. I would sail round the lake, anchor in every bay, and land you on every promontory and island. I would point out the perpetual change of prospect: The woods, rocks, cliffs, and mountains, by turns vanishing or rising into view: Now gaining on the sight, hanging over our heads in their full dimensions, beautifully dreadful; and now, by a change of situation, assuming new romantic shapes, retiring and lessening on the eye, and insensibly losing themselves in an azure mist. I would remark the contrast of light and shade, produced by the morning and evening sun; the one gilding the western, and the other the eastern side of this immense amphitheatre; while the vast shadow projected by the mountains

mountains buries the opposite part in a deep and purple gloom, which the eye can hardly penetrate: The natural variety of colouring which the several objects produce is no less wonderful and pleasing: The ruling tincts in the valley being those of azure, green, and gold, yet ever various, arising from an intermixture of the lake, the woods, the grass, and corn-fields: These are finely contrasted by the grey rocks and cliffs; and the whole heightened by the yellow streams of light, the purple hues, and misty azure of the mountains. Sometimes a serene air and clear sky disclose the tops of the highest hills: At others, you see clouds involving their summits, resting on their sides, or descending to their base, and rolling among the vallies, as in a vast furnace.—When the winds are high, they roar among the cliffs and caverns like peals of thunder; then, too, the clouds are seen in vast bodies sweeping along the hills in gloomy greatness, while the lake joins the tumult and tosses like a sea: But in calm weather the whole scene becomes new: The lake is a perfect mirror; and the landskip in all its beauty, islands, fields, woods, rocks, and mountains, are seen inverted, and floating
on

on its surface. I will now carry you to the top of a cliff, where if you dare approach the ridge, a new scene of astonishment presents itself, where the valley, lake, and islands, seem laying at your feet; where this expanse of water appears diminished to a little pool amidst the vast immeasurable objects that surround it; for here the summits of more distant hills appear before those you had already seen; and rising behind each other in successive ranges and azure groups of craggy and broken steeps, form an immense and awful picture, which can only be expressed by the image of a tempestuous sea of mountains.—Let me now conduct you down again to the valley, and conclude with one circumstance more; which is, that a walk by still moon-light (at which time the distant water-falls are heard in all their variety of sound) among these enchanting dales, opens a scene of such delicate beauty, repose, and solemnity, as exceeds all description.

F I N I S.

ne
ch
e-
nd
re
to
le
n-
se
nd
re
m
an
n-
w
nd
e;
at
rd
se
e-
x-